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A WALKING TOUR OF THE LOWRY PUEBLO RUINS

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



Lowry Pueblo as it may have appeared during occupancy

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT • COLORADO

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LOWRY PUEBLO RUINS



Photograph courtesy Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

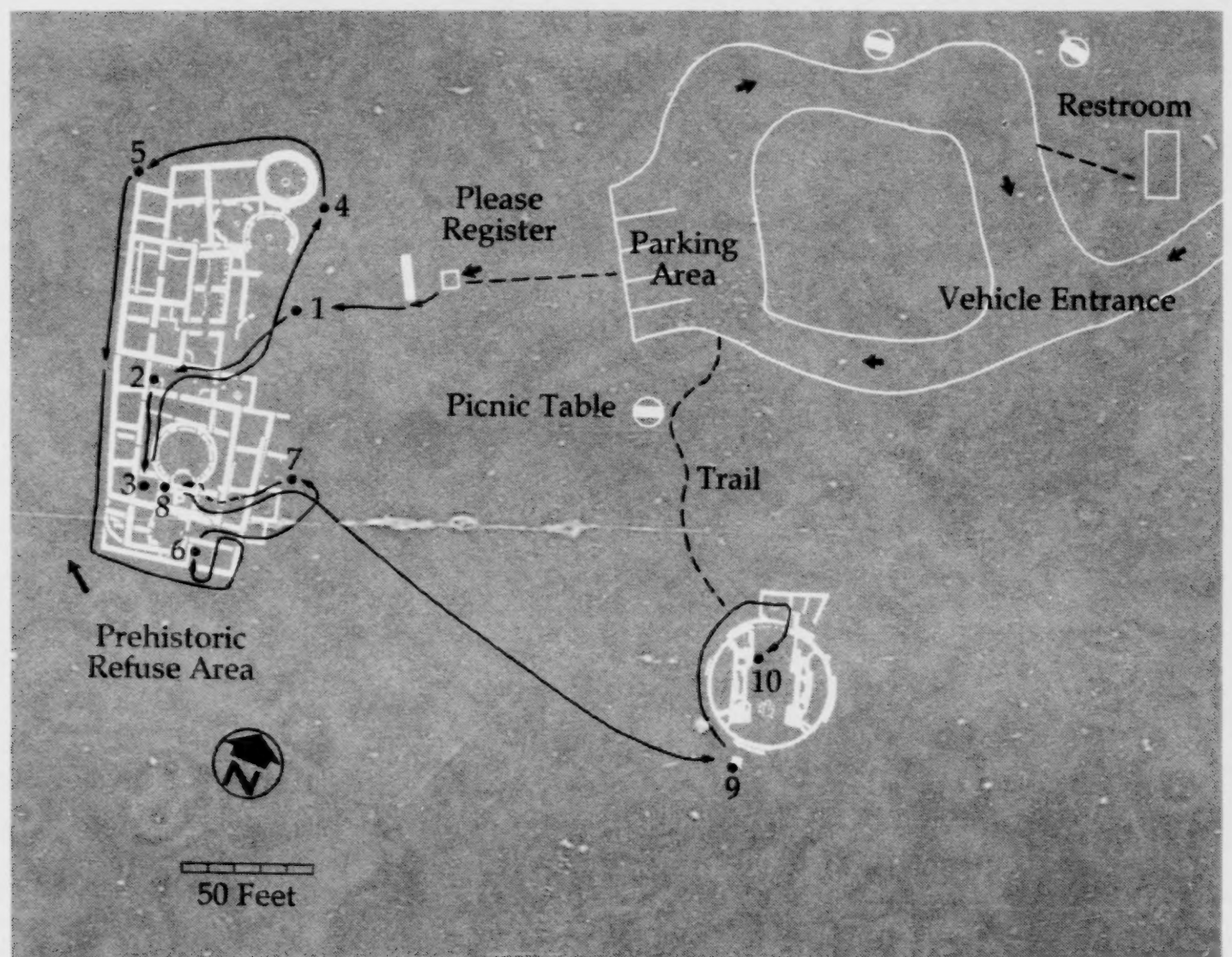
WELCOME TO THE LOWRY PUEBLO RUINS NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The Lowry Pueblo Ruins, named after George Lowry, an early-day homesteader, are shrouded in mystery as silent as the ancient walls.

What were the people like? Where did they come from and where did they go? What were their ties with their neighbors? How did they perceive their world? Although these questions remain largely unanswered, a wealth of evidence of their once-flourishing culture has been recovered through scientific research.

While exploring the structures at Lowry, imagine what it would have been like 800 years ago.

A numbered interpretive route begins at the Pueblo. **Please watch your footing on the ladders and walls.**



1 Lowry Pueblo was constructed by the Anasazi (Ancient Ones) about AD 1060, on top of the ruined pithouses of an eighth century ancestral culture. The inhabitants were farmers who raised corn, beans, squash and tobacco. They supplemented their diet with small game and made tools from nearby stones and the bones of the animals they hunted. Stoneworking and pottery-making were very important industries. Anasazi homes exhibited fine masonry construction techniques; and rooms were often plastered inside and painted with bold geometric designs. Lowry Pueblo was used for living quarters and ritual ceremonies by a community of about 100 people. It contains one of the largest Great Kivas or ceremonial chambers yet found in this area.

Climb the ladder to your left to reach stop 2.

2 From this vantage point you can see the surrounding area where other prehistoric villages and fields once existed. Directly south is the Ute Mountain, sacred to the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe. A spring enhanced by a reservoir and several small natural pools located in a central canyon, provided water for the inhabitants of Lowry. Step through the remains of the T-shaped doorway onto the new kiva roof. Being very careful of the walls, peer into the room blocks surrounding the kiva. Note the small holes that once held wooden beams needed for support of the second story floors.

3 Now focus on the detailed characteristics of Lowry Pueblo itself. Lowry began as a small village of a few roofed-over rooms and central kivas below where you are standing. Between AD 1085 and AD 1170 several more rooms, the Great Kiva, and the painted kiva were added. When abandoned the pueblo consisted of 40 rooms, some of which stood three stories high, and 8 kivas. The Great Kiva (on the left) was used throughout the life of the pueblo and was likely a ritual place of importance to the region. Lowry Pueblo Ruins were first excavated in the early 1930s by Dr. Paul S. Martin of the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History. Dr. Martin and his coworkers uncovered and studied much more of the pueblo than is seen now. For a third of a century Lowry Ruins were again abandoned as the wind worked to rebury them.

Return to stop 1 and continue north to stop 4.

**AERIAL VIEW
OF
LOWRY PUEBLO**



4 In 1965 efforts to excavate and preserve Lowry were renewed. This site is located on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. BLM sponsored an excavation and stabilization project through a contract with the University of Colorado. After more than two years of carefully uncovering the site again and repairing the eroded masonry, Lowry Pueblo was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark on October 17, 1967. As you walk around the perimeter of the pueblo, imagine how the daily activity in the village was defined by the walls bisecting and surrounding it. The Anasazi remodeled, modified, and expanded the pueblo at least four or five times. Each time they designed their homes to their changing social and kinship associations, political and ritual ties, and to the needs of their daily existence. How does the pueblo design compare with the ways that we manage our own living and working spaces today?

5 To the left, along the "back wall" of the pueblo, note the uninterrupted length and how ground-level access to the community was denied to anyone approaching from this direction. Was this apparent physical barrier also symbolic? The Pueblo here probably stood two or three stories high with entrances provided by rooftops or ladders. Most of the daily activity of the pueblo was away from this area and to the "front" of the pueblo. This was discovered during early excavations which showed a marked lack of artifacts here and concentrations in other areas.

Continue around the pueblo to the south end.

6 During each expansion and remodeling sequence, masonry construction techniques changed, perhaps due to regional trends, or perhaps because of the abilities and preferences of the individual builders. The wall in front of you exhibits two different types of masonry work. It is believed that the masonry on the left was the outer wall of the original pueblo and was built by masons from Chaco Canyon. Chaco style masonry is characterized by the layering of narrow slabs, the use of many small chinking stones, and frequent banding by deliberate use of darker sandstones. The abutting wall on the right represents a later addition of blockier local masonry style. As the initial pueblo structure resembles Chacoan architecture, it may have been an early colony or trading center of the Chacoan Anasazi from what is now New Mexico.



Photograph courtesy Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

BONE TOOLS RECOVERED DURING EXCAVATIONS

Due to the presence of sand particles in the processed ground corn and grains, the teeth of Anasazi were often worn down completely by age 25.

Continue through the doorway to reach stop 8.

8 The interpretive panel to the left as you face the protective gate, explains BLM's efforts to preserve the fragile kiva paintings. The panel inside the kiva displays the original painting and illustrates what the painting looked like when first excavated. This panel is removed during winter months. The plaster remaining on the wall behind you is original and very fragile. **Please do not touch it!** Archaeologists believe that the Anasazi frequently decorated the inner walls of their homes with their art, painted on plastered surfaces.

Retrace your steps to stop 7 and continue east toward the great kiva.



Photograph courtesy Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

ANASAZI CERAMIC VESSELS

9 The great kiva probably attracted groups from the surrounding countryside and it could also have been a common meeting spot where goods and ideas were exchanged. Ritualized contacts between groups may have led to more widespread trade relations. The entrance to the kiva is across from where you are standing. The roof of the structure was level with the ground surface. An additional entrance may have been through a central smoke hole in the roof. Large ax-hewn beams rested on the masonry platforms within the kiva and supported the roof. Juniper logs that formed the roof have yielded tree-ring dates of AD 1106-1170.

Being very careful, you can enter the kiva through the narrow entrance.

10 You are now standing where the large central hearth, or firepit, was located. The masonry structures on either side which adjoin the roof support platforms may have held sacred objects or ritual costumes. Perhaps they served as foot drums, providing rhythm and mood for dancers who seemingly appeared from nowhere in the smokey firelight.



Photograph courtesy Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

LOWRY PUEBLO AND "PAINTED KIVA" DURING EXCAVATION IN THE 1930s.

Lowry Pueblo is one of thousands of prehistoric Indian sites on public lands in the Four Corners area. The Anasazi were a highly successful people for their time, thriving in a marginal arid land and closely allied to change. Because the remnants of the Anasazi culture represents the highest recorded density of prehistoric sites in North America, this area in southwestern Colorado has recently been designated by BLM as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.



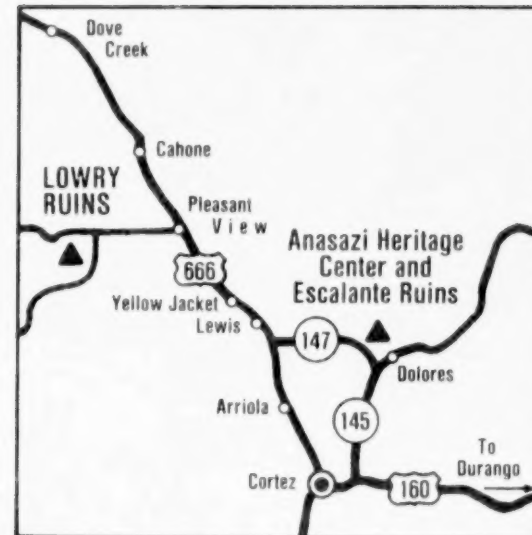
PRESERVATION OF THE NATION'S CULTURAL RESOURCES

Lowry Pueblo Ruins are to be enjoyed as part of the heritage of our nation's land and resources. Please leave them as you found them for others to enjoy too. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the Antiquities Act of 1906 prohibit anyone, without authorization from BLM, from removing or disturbing cultural material and artifacts from Federal lands. Help us to preserve this rich heritage. Please report any vandalism or damage to historical or archaeological sites on public lands in southwestern Colorado to: Area Manager, BLM San Juan Resource Area Office, Durango, Colorado (303) 247-4082.



Photograph courtesy Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

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Located in the Four Corners Region of Southwest Colorado, Lowry Pueblo Ruins are nine miles west of Highway 666 at Pleasant View. In the same general area are the Escalante Ruins and BLM's Anasazi Heritage Center, Mesa Verde National Park, Hovenweep National Monument, Ute Mountain Tribal Park, and the San Juan National Forest. The road to Lowry Ruin is not maintained in the wintertime. Picnicking areas are available but no overnight camping is allowed. For more information contact:

Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
San Juan Resource Area
701 Camino del Rio
Durango, Colorado 81301
Telephone (303) 247-4082



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